

91-692

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Supreme Court, U.S.

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IN THE  
**Supreme Court of the United States**  
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

TONYA RHODES, Personal Representative of the  
Estate of JAMES EDWARD WEST, Deceased,  
*Petitioner,*  
v.

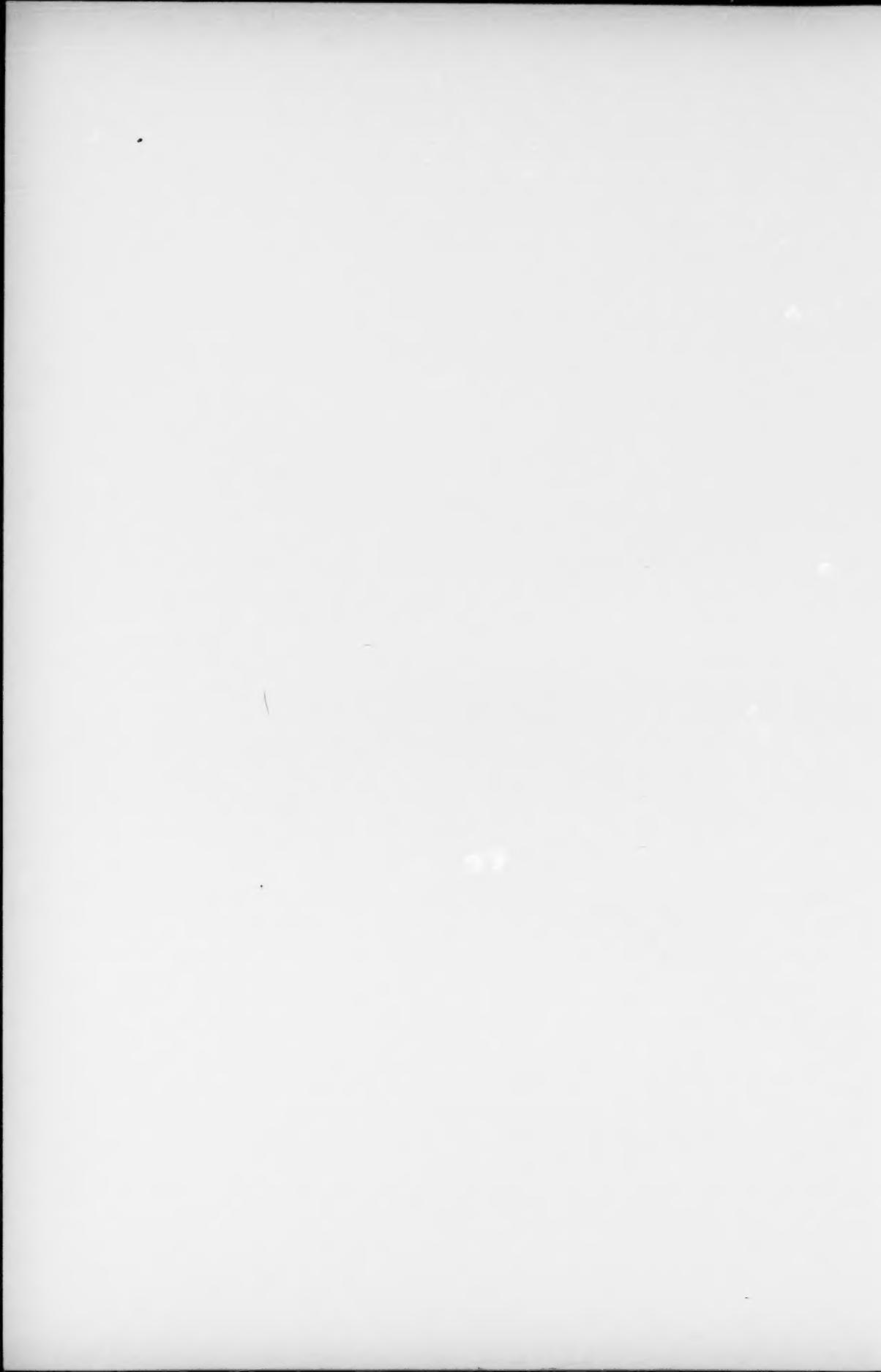
CRAIG McDANIEL, H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official  
capacity as Van Buren County Sheriff, VAN BUREN  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT and VAN BUREN  
COUNTY,  
jointly and severally,  
*Respondents.*

On Petition For Writ of Certiorari to the United  
States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI**

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## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

In a case in which petitioner's complaint which alleges violations of the Fourth Amendment was dismissed under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56:

- I. Should Petitioner Have Been Allowed to Complete Discovery Prior to Entry of an Order Granting Summary Judgment?
- II. Did Respondents' Warrantless Entry into Petitioner's Home, without Consent and without Exigent Circumstances Present, Violate Petitioner's Fourth Amendment Rights to Be Free From Unreasonable Search and Seizure?
- III. Did Respondents' violate Petitioner's Fourth Amendment rights after illegally entering Petitioner's home unreasonably creating circumstances which forced a confrontation with Decedent in his own home?

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CRAIG McDANDEL, H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official  
capacity as Van Buren County Sheriff, VAN BUREN  
COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT and VAN BUREN COUNTY,  
jointly and severally,

*Respondents.*

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**PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI**

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Petitioner, Tonya Rhodes, respectfully prays that a Writ of Certiorari issue to review the judgment, opinion and order affirming the United States District Court and denying rehearing of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. The opinion and judgment of the Court of Appeals were entered in this case on June 10, 1991, and the petition for rehearing was denied on July 30, 1991.

**OPINIONS BELOW**

The opinion of the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit entered June 10, 1991 is reprinted in the Appendix herein at 7a. The Order of the Court of

Appeals for the Sixth Circuit entered July 30, 1991 denying Petitioner's motion for rehearing is reprinted in the Appendix herein at 15a. The Order granting Respondents/ Motion for Publication entered September 10, 1991 is reprinted in the Appendix herein at 7a. The memorandum and order of the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan entered December 13, 1989 is reprinted in the Appendix herein at 35a.

#### **JURISDICTION**

This is a civil action arising under the United States Constitution and, therefore, jurisdiction for the filing of this action was invoked under 28 USC § 1331, and § 1291. The jurisdiction of this Court to review the judgment of the Sixth Circuit is invoked under 28 USC § 1254(1).

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS INVOLVED**

United States Constitution

*Amendment IV* states:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

#### **PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Petitioner Tonya Rhodes is the daughter of the deceased James West and serves as personal representative for the estate. The estate of James West,

through personal representative Tonya Rhodes, brought this action on the 9th day of August, 1989, under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution and 42 USC § 1983 and § 1988 to recover damages resulting from the illegal entry into the deceased's home and the shooting death of the decedent by Van Buren County Deputy Sheriff Craig McDannel, after the illegal entry.

On December 13, 1989, the district court granted Respondents' motion for summary judgment. See Appendix at 35a infra. Discovery was not complete. Petitioner was expeditiously pursuing discovery and informed the district court that further discovery would be required. On Petitioner's appeal, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, on June 10, 1991, affirmed the judgment from which appeal was taken. (See Appendix at 8a infra) A petition for rehearing was timely sought and denied by order of the court, entered July 30, 1991. (See Appendix at 15a, infra) On September 10, 1991, the Court granted Respondents' Motion for Publication.

#### STATEMENT OF FACTS

On the evening of March 7, 1989, the deceased, James West, (hereinafter West) was in his home at 311 East Street in Hartford, Michigan. West resided in this dwelling with his elderly mother. At approximately 11:00 p.m. on March 7, 1989, deputies from the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department responded to a dispatch directing them to 311 East Street in Hartford. A call had been lodged with the Hartford Police Department alleging that a woman was being chased with a knife. A man actually made a call to the police.

The Court of Appeals accepted Respondents' characterizations that Shari Heffington, the deceased's girlfriend, called the police, reporting that she was being chased around the home with a machete. This is not supported by any fact in the record.

When the officers arrived at the West home, they did not see anything occurring. Shari Heffington came to the door alone, and she was not being pursued nor in any apparent danger. At that point, the normal procedure would have been to take a statement. Ignoring the usual procedures, Deputies Shaw and McDannel "accompanied Shari Heffington through the porch area and into the front room of the residence".

McDannel, Shaw and Shari entered the first living room of the home and still had not seen West. West's mother was asleep in a side bedroom, unknown to the deputies. McDannel admits that he never paid any attention to the surroundings or layout of the home. After a time, West entered the second room of the living room area from a back bedroom. West was carrying a machete as he came out of the back bedroom. According to the deputies, West was told to drop the machete, but failed to do so. He never spoke. Deputy McDannel shot and killed James West.

It was not until after the shot was fired that Shari Heffington was removed from the home and placed in a police car. Before he was shot, West had to step around a couch before entering the second living room. Deputy McDannel testified that the blade was pointing at the floor while held in Mr. West's right hand. The deceased was left handed and suffered from disabling arthritis in his hands and shoulders.

Deputy McDannel testified that, prior to entering the scene, he had not formulated a plan or approach

as to how the situation would be handled, although the deputies claim they knew West was in the house. The deputies were allegedly responding to the call as a domestic dispute with a weapon involved.

## REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Sixth Circuit on September 10, 1991 granted Respondents' Motion for Publication of the opinion in this matter, thus, assuring that it will set the tone for police conduct on the important constitutional principles affecting home searches.

Respondents cannot overcome the presumption against warrantless entries into the home based on the facts in this case. Respondents' actions caused a confrontation with West resulting in his death. No basis exists justifying Respondents' warrantless entry into the West home. Likewise, no basis exists justifying West's death after their illegal entry.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has decided an important question of federal law which departs from the "presumptively unreasonable" standard of searches of a private dwelling. The line drawn in Fourth Amendment cases at the footsteps of the American home should be clear and bright. Warrantless entry into the home should not be justified on the basis of afterthought. This entry, as in *Payton v. New York*, 445 U.S. 573 (1980) is "presumptively unreasonable". This Court has stated: "It is a 'basic principle of Fourth Amendment Law' that searches and seizures inside a home without a warrant are presumptively unreasonable" 445 U.S. 573 at 585.

This standard has been disregarded by the Sixth Circuit in this instance.

The Respondents offer two justifications for their entry into the West home: (1) consent and (2) exigent circumstances. The Sixth Circuit departed from the current case law in its application of these doctrines in this case. Even the dissenters in *Payton* recognized that, at a minimum, four restrictions are required to guard against invasions of personal privacy of a person's dwelling:

"These four restrictions on home arrests—felony, knock, and announce, daytime and stringent probable cause—constitute power and complimentary protections for the privacy interests associated with the home."

*Payton*, 445 U.S. 16 616-617 (White J., dissenting)

None of these limitations have been satisfied in this case. The basis for arriving at the home was apparently an anonymous call by a male individual. This did not form any basis in the mind of the police officers to justify the kind of emergency which is described by the Court of Appeals. *In fact, the police officers all acknowledged that no emergency existed.* This fact was completely ignored by the Court of Appeals. In its decision, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has significantly broadened the principals which would justify warrantless entries into private dwellings contrary to current teachings of this Court.

## **II. This Court Should Rule That Summary Judgment Is Inappropriate When Discovery Has Not Been Completed**

In a motion for summary judgment, the non-moving party is entitled to have the Court view the evidence

and the inferences therefrom in a light most favorable to him. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242; 106 S. Ct. 2505; 91 L. Ed. 2d 202, 216 (1986) ("[T]he evidence of the non-movant is to be believed, and all justifiable inferences are to be drawn in his favor.")

In this case, the total circumstances surrounding the unlawful entry and shooting must be considered; not just the self serving testimony of the officers, but the contradictions as well. In view of the evidence presented, a reasonable fact finder could conclude that Respondents violated the constitutional protections of James West, the deceased.

This can be viewed in two parts, the illegal entry into the home and the excessive force which occurred as a result of the illegal entry. The facts relating to both are in dispute and should have been submitted to the jury. The evidence Petitioner presented is entitled to be believed, and all justifiable inferences are to be drawn in her favor. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242; 106 S. Ct. 2505; 91 L. Ed. 2d.202, 216 (1986).

Moreover, the district court granted summary judgment before discovery was complete, despite Petitioner's requests to be allowed to complete discovery pursuant to FRCP 56(F). The court of appeals affirmed the district court's dismissal. This holding directly conflicts with the other circuits' conclusions on this issue. See Advisory Committee for the 1963 Amendments to Fed.R.Civ.P. 56(f); *See also, National Life Insurance Co. v. Solomon*, 529 F.2d 59 (2nd Cir. 1975); *First Chicago International v. Untied Exchange Co.*, 836 F.2d 1375 (App. DC 1988) (determination of summary judgment issues is appropriate only after

Plaintiff has had full opportunity to conduct discovery).

Petitioner was diligently pursuing discovery when the court set this matter for hearing. Petitioner had hired two national experts. Less than three months did not provide adequate time for Petitioner to locate Shari Heffington nor to properly obtain and examine all of the physical evidence which was in Respondents' possession. Petitioner was still pursuing depositions of investigating officers and acquisition of the physical evidence when summary judgment entered. Petitioner has since located Ms. Heffington and believes she will testify (1) she did not invite the deputies into the home; and (2) deadly force was not necessary.

In addition, summary judgment is inappropriate where an affidavit of an expert opinion raises or supports material questions of fact. Where, as here, Petitioner's experts were shown to be qualified and their rationales reasonable, the rules do not require prior disclosure of underlying facts. Petitioner's experts' affidavits comport with Rules 702-705 justifying a denial of summary judgment. *See Bieghler v. Kleppe*, 633 F.2d 531 (9th Cir. 1980).

It is imperative to remember that these experts were not allowed sufficient time within which to review all of the evidence. Additional affidavits from Petitioner's experts, which would have been submitted had discovery progressed and time allowed, would have demonstrated significant factual questions to the lower court. Had Petitioner been allowed to pursue discovery, expert criminalist Lucien Haag would have testified that the distance between the victim and the deputies was at least 8-9 feet, not the 4-6 feet as claimed by McDannel. His examinations of the phys-

ical evidence reveal that the trajectory of the shot and the location of Deputy McDannel is contrary to Respondents' testimony of the officers, raising a legitimate inference that deadly force was not required and possible fabrication on the part of the Defendants. Dr. George Kirkham, a nationally recognized expert in police procedure, would have testified that the procedures utilized by Respondents in this instance were contrary to proper police procedures, were grossly negligent and were directly linked to the death of Petitioner's decedent. The lower court then drew unwarranted conclusions of fact from Respondents' version of the scenario while disregarding the testimony of Petitioner's experts.

### **III. The Sixth Circuit Was Wrong to Hold the Respondents' Warrantless Entry into the Decedent's Home without Proper Authorization or Justification Did Not Violate Petitioner's Fourth Amendment Rights**

The basic history attendant to the sanctity and privacy of the home is preserved in the Constitution and reemphasized in the cases where the Court has interpreted that issue under the Fourth Amendment. The Sixth Circuit has created a significant and dangerous departure from clearly established law in upholding the warrantless entry into Petitioner's home under these facts. The Court noted in *Payton v. New York*, 445 U.S. 573, 100 S. Ct. 1371 (1980) its approval of the Second Circuit position stated in *United States v. Reid*, 572 F.2d 412, 423 (1978), as follows:

"To be arrested in the home involves not only the invasion attendant to all arrests but also the invasion of the sanctity of the home. This is simply too substantial an invasion to

allow without warrant, at least in the absence of exigent circumstances, even when it is accomplished under statutory authority and when probable cause is clearly present."

The attempted justification for entry into the private home in this case is a thought which occurred "after the fact". Mr. West was shot and killed in his own living room. No warrant, no probable cause and no arrest can be offered to explain the presence of the officers in his home. He was presumed innocent of any crime. No one was in immediate danger. No warning of entry was given to Mr. West. An intrusion into the home to act on an anonymous phone call is just the type of warrantless entry that the Fourth Amendment was designed to guard against. To surrender these protections because the entry seems expedient is to sacrifice constitutional principles to the impulse of the moment. The sanctity and privacy of the home is at stake in this ruling. In his majority opinion in *Payton*, Justice Stevens states that "the physical entry of the home is the chief evil against which the wording of the Fourth Amendment is directed." *Payton*, 445 U.S. at 585. Justice White in his dissent did not dispute that "... the home is generally a very private area or that the common law displayed a special 'reverence' ... for the individual's right of privacy in his house. *Miller v. United States*, *supra*, at 313"; *Payton*, 445 U.S. at 615. This promise of security from invasion by the state contained in the Fourth Amendment is a precious principle. It should not be compromised in order to justify an entry which never should have occurred in the first place.

**A. This Court Should Rule that Its Decisions under the Fourth Amendment Protect Petitioner from Unreasonable Search and Seizure When the Police Entered His Home without Proper Consent**

The deceased had committed no crime and had every legal right to be secure in his own home. It is undisputed that Respondents did not have a warrant to enter Petitioner's home. No constitutionally sound basis for a warrantless entry in the West home has ever been shown.

Shari Heffington did not have any authority to "invite" the police into the West home. Petitioner does not concede Heffington "invited" the deputies into the West home. Petitioner believes that, had discovery not been cut short by the lower court's ruling, Shari would have testified she did not invite the deputies into the dwelling. The court of appeals improperly concluded that Shari had "from that address previously contacted police and admitted to residing there on occasion." (Opinion at p. 4) The deputies had absolutely no knowledge of this alleged fact before they entered the home. This conclusion is completely unsubstantiated and unjustifiable. The "non-existence" of this knowledge does not confer a "mutual use" status upon Shari. More importantly, the officers were completely unaware of any previous domestic calls to that residence. The court of appeals imputes this knowledge to the deputies. The deputies never asked Shari if she lived there. The police only knew that a man had called in the report. Their actions, based solely upon the knowledge that an unknown man had called, are a complete affront to the security provided by the Fourth Amendment. The court of appeals draws inferences which are completely unsupported by facts. The Constitution does not envision

such a foundation for a warrantless entry into a private home.

The court of appeals' holding departs from the Supreme Court's holding in *United States v. Matlock*, 415 U.S. 164, 171 (1974), which stated, "consent can be obtained from a third party with 'common authority' over the property, but that a mere property interest' is insufficient". *Fludd v. United States Secret Service*, 771 F.2d 549 (1985). As a prerequisite to finding common authority, (for which consent might be valid) the courts have held that there must be a "mutual use of the property by persons generally having joint access or control for most purposes". *Fludd v United States Secret Service*, 771 F.2d 549 (1985), citing *Matlock*. There has been absolutely no demonstration of mutual use or control by Heffington in the West home. The conclusions drawn by the district court and the court of appeals are all based upon after-the-fact claims, which should not be considered in evaluating Shari's alleged consent or ability to consent. The lower court's conclusions constitute a serious departure from well established law for consent as a justification for a warrantless entry into a private dwelling.

**B. This Court Should Rule that Respondents' Warrantless Entry into the Decedent's Home Is Not Justified by the Exigent Circumstances Doctrine**

A few narrow exceptions exist justifying a warrantless entry into a private dwelling. The burden of establishing exigent circumstances justifying a warrantless in-home entry is on the State. In limited circumstances, emergency situations warrant entry into a dwelling. In this case, the facts simply do not support an exception based on the exigent circum-

stances doctrine and the State has not met its burden. The appellate court's conclusions directly contradict well established law.

This Court clearly recognized in *Coolidge v. New Hampshire*, 403 U.S. 443 (1971), and *Payton* that the "Fourth Amendment has drawn a firm line at the entrance to the house. Absent exigent circumstances, that threshold may not be crossed." *Payton*, 445 U.S. at 590.

The Court has not and should not back away from the presumption of unreasonableness that attaches to all warrantless home entries. In *Welsh v. Wisconsin*, 466 U.S. 740, (1984), the Court reaffirmed the long-standing requirement that exigent circumstances must be established which overcome the presumption of unreasonableness. The Court was clear in its holding that no exigency is created simply because there is probable cause to believe a crime has been committed. In this case, probable cause has never been established, and certainly, the deputies had no reliable information that any crime had been committed. *Welsh*, 466 U.S. at 751.

It is clear that the Court reaffirmed prior decisions of the Court which have emphasized that only a few carefully delineated exceptions to the warrant requirement exist. *Welsh*, 466 U.S. at 749.

The lower court apparently accepted Respondents' arguments that exigent circumstances existed on the basis that they were responding to an emergency because "the telephone call indicated that Shari was being pursued by a man with a knife". Respondents had no knowledge of who made the call, and their illegal entry should not be justified predicated on an

anonymous phone call. In accepting Respondents' version of the facts, the lower court stated, "[f]urthermore, upon arrival the officers verified that an emergency existed which posed a real danger to the police and public." This interpretation of the facts is accepted unquestionably in spite of clear evidence to the contrary. The officers denied any emergency existed.

The facts, as stated by the deputies, refute any possible contention that exigent circumstances existed to justify a warrantless entry into the West home. Respondents testified that, upon arrival at the scene, *nothing* was occurring! It is undisputed that Shari was unharmed when she answered their knock at the porch door and came outside. She was not in any immediate danger. The inference to be drawn from the fact that Mrs. West was asleep during the time this occurred further supports the deputies' admissions that no emergency existed.

Respondents' attempt to apply the exigent circumstances doctrine *after* the deputies were already in the home by stating that "the decedent was obviously committing a crime in the presence of the officers, felonious assault." Petitioner disputes this conjecture but, more importantly, the proper time frame for an analysis of exigent circumstances is *prior* to the illegal entry into Petitioner's home. Events which did or did not arise after the initial illegal entry do not relate back in the consideration of the exigent circumstances doctrine. The initial entry was unreasonable, and it was improper. The decision to make that entry was at least negligent under the facts of this case. Even though Petitioner contends that it was grossly negligent, simple negligence is enough to make

the initial entry unreasonable and a violation of the Fourth Amendment protections.

The emergency exception to the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirement dictates that the entering officer subjectively believe that an emergency exists; the officer's motivation is critical to the court's determination of the validity of the defense. In *Frazier v. Cast*, 771 F.2d 259 (1985), the Court issued sanctions against the defense counsel for asserting the defense of exigent circumstances without a factual basis for doing so. The Court concluded that no emergency existed justifying a warrantless entry into the decedent's home. In *Frazier*, the Court found that the police attempted to force the decedent out of the home with tear gas and then entered the home to find the decedent unconscious and in need of aid, but not in a life threatening situation. The *Frazier* Court held that the police officer's actions were motivated by impatience, not concern to save the man.

The deputies in this case had the alleged "victim" outside the home, unharmed and not in a presently threatening situation. No "fear of harm to the police or the public" was present when the deputies arrived at the West home. The testimony of Respondents, themselves, directly contradicts the lower court's conclusions that an emergency existed permitting a warrantless entry. No "real danger that evidence or a suspect might be lost" existed when the deputies entered the West home without a warrant. Respondents clearly violated the sanctity of this private dwelling when they entered it without a warrant and without the proper authority.

The lower court's conclusions are overreaching and allow an impermissible exception to Fourth Amend-

ment protections. Adherence to restrictions upon unannounced entries are taught by this Court. If the security and privacy of the home is to have any meaning these teachings must be followed. If the Fourth Amendment is to provide protection this Court must ensure that invasions of the home, particularly in the night-time, follow the rules.

**IV. This Court Should Address the Issue of Whether Respondents' Violated Petitioner's Fourth Amendment Rights after Illegally Entering Petitioner's Home and Unreasonably Creating Circumstances Which Forced a Confrontation with Decedent in His Own Home Resulting in His Death.**

The court also summarily dismissed Petitioner's claims of excessive force based solely on the events occurring *after* the police illegally entered the home. The lower court failed to consider the illegal entry. Moreover, it failed to consider the impact of the proposed testimony of Petitioner's experts and the premature cut-off of discovery. By allowing the ends to justify the means the Fourth Amendment protections have been trivialized by the court.

The deputies should never have been in the home in the first place, and their explanation for how they entered should not be believed under the totality of the circumstances. This conclusion is supported by the expert testimony of Dr. George Kirkham.

Deputy McDannel is not entitled to the self protection or protection of others defense where he is at fault for creating the need for self defense. Deputy McDannel's action of alleged self defense does not affect his culpability with regard to his prior act creating the confrontation. by violating the Fourth Amendment, Deputy Shaw testified that the dis-

patcher informed the deputies that a man called about someone being chased with a knife. Deputy McDannel testified that, based on the dispatch, he had knowledge a weapon was involved. He also testified that, when she met the deputies at the door, Shari told them West was still in the house. Despite this knowledge, the deputies took Shari back into the house. Deputy McDannel was not under any "pressure" when he committed the first act of entering the decedent's home without first removing the citizen. This unreasonable act was not only a violation of decedent's Fourth Amendment Rights, it was a direct causal link to all subsequent events.

The fact that Mr. West is dead and unable to give testimony does not mean that the court is free to believe the self serving statements of the officers, particularly when their statements do not conform to the physical evidence and are contradicted by Petitioner's experts. Discovery was not concluded, and Petitioner was not given the opportunity to examine all the physical evidence. A careful review of the photographs and the police reports raises serious credibility and factual issues.

In every photograph taken by the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department, the door through which the deceased allegedly came is closed. This means an individual had to go to the room and close the door, properly latching it so that it would not swing open as it normally does. With the door closed, the entry point of the bullet into the wall is visible. When the door is open, as Respondent contends it was during the shooting, the bullet hole is covered by approximately 6 inches of the door. This evidence emphatically contradicts the testimony of Respondents, raising

credibility and factual issues concerning the amount of time elapsing before Mr. West was shot. It contradicts the officers claim that they had no time to retreat.

It is this illegal, 11:00 p.m., unannounced entry which caused the circumstances resulting in the death of Mr. West. This is much more than an "incremental" intrusion made to effect an arrest. It is a highly intrusive invasion fitting none of the four restrictions set out by Justice White in *Payton* for "home arrests". It is not even made to effect an arrest. It is an entry for which no plausible explanation has been made to meet the state's burden for justifying a warrantless entry. It was, as testified to by Dr. George Kirkham, reckless and unreasonable.

#### CONCLUSION

Significant departures from clearly established law served to deprive Petitioner of the opportunity to complete discovery prior to summary judgment. The departures adopted by the Sixth Circuit also broadened the exceptions to the applicability allowing consent and exigent circumstances to justify a warrantless entry into a private dwelling. The application of these broadened exceptions contradicts the presumptive unreasonable standard of a warrantless entry into a person's home.

Justice Stevens' conclusions in denouncing improper warrantless entries into private dwellings in *Payton* also holds true under the facts of this case: "... neither history nor this nation's experience requires us to disregard the overriding respect for the sanctity of the home that has been imbedded in our traditions since the origins of the Republic." *Payton*, 445 U.S.

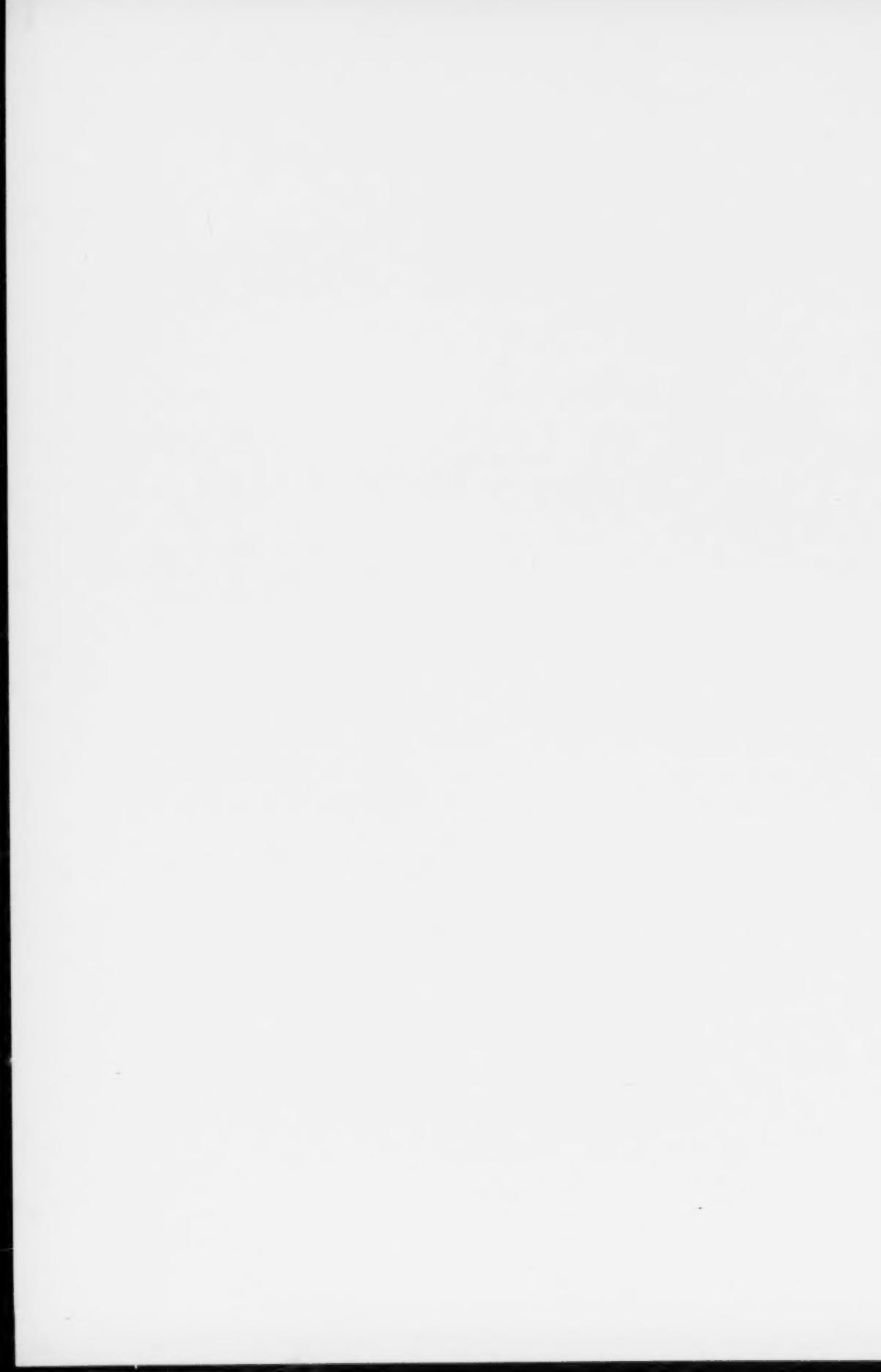
at 601. Upholding the officer's entry into the West home directly controverts the plain meaning of the Fourth Amendment and the historical preservation of the sanctity of the home by this Court.

Reaffirmation of *Payton* and its progeny, as well as *Matlock* and its progeny, is critical when the circuits seek to substantially undermine and alter the protections guaranteed by the United States Constitution and developed under the case law of this Court. Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court grant her petition for certiorari for full consideration of the issues raised herein.

Respectfully Submitted,

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## APPENDIX



APPENDIX A

Nos. 90-1160/1161/1162

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT**

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TONYA RHODES,  
*Plaintiff-Appellant,*

v.

CRAIG McDANDEL, et al.,  
*Defendants-Appellees.*

ON APPEAL from the  
United States District  
Court for the Western  
District of Michigan

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Decided and Filed June 10, 1991

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Before: RYAN and SUHRHEINRICH, Circuit Judges;  
and SILER, Chief District Judge.\*

PER CURIAM. The appellant, Tonya Rhodes, representative of the estate of James E. West (hereinafter "plaintiff"), in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action appeals a summary judgment entered by the district court in favor of the appellees Deputy Sheriff Craig McDannel, Sheriff H. Cal Rosema, and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department.

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\*The Honorable Eugene E. Siler, Jr., Chief United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky and United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, sitting by designation.

This case arises out of a shooting incident that occurred at the home of the late James West in Hartford, Michigan. On March 7, 1989, the Hartford Police Department was telephoned by Shari Heffington (Shari)<sup>1</sup> who stated that West was chasing her around the home with a machete. Deputies McDannel and Shaw went to the door of West's home and were met by Shari. Deputies Lux and Craft remained outside the home to secure the perimeter. Shari informed the officers that West was in the home and threatening her with a knife. Shari escorted the officers into the living room when West entered the room and advanced with a machete toward Shari and the two officers. Several times the officers ordered West to drop the knife, but West failed to heed the warnings. When he advanced within a distance of four to six feet with the machete raised, McDannel fired his weapon and killed West.

Plaintiff raised two issues before the district court on the merits of the case: gross negligence by McDannel and the use of unreasonable deadly force. The court granted summary judgment for the defendants. On the first issue (gross negligence), relying on *Jones v. Sherrill*, 827 F.2d 1102, 1106 (6th Cir. 1987), it ruled that the undisputed facts negate any gross negligence on the part of the deputies. On the second issue (unreasonable deadly force), it held as a matter of law that the deadly force used was not unreasonable, in light of the undisputed facts that West advanced toward the officers with a machete that had a 24-inch blade, that he raised it after ignoring a warning to drop it, and that he got within four to six feet of the officers before he was shot. In addition, the plaintiff moved for a recusal of the judge. The trial court denied the motion for failure to assert facts sufficient for recusal under 28 U.S.C. §§ 144 and 455(a). For the following reasons, we affirm.

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<sup>1</sup>There was some evidence in the record that the caller may have been Junior Heffington, Shari's father.

## I.

The first issue is whether the plaintiff was given sufficient opportunity for discovery prior to the entry of summary judgment. The district court has broad discretion in regulating discovery, and its ruling will not be overturned unless there is a clear abuse of discretion. *Misco, Inc. v. United States Steel Corp.*, 784 F.2d 198 (6th Cir. 1986); *see also Little v. City of Seattle*, 863 F.2d 681 (9th Cir. 1988).

As the court issued its final orders within three months of filing of the complaint, the plaintiff argues that she did not have the benefit of the following expert evaluations: (1) an expert opinion stating that the distance between the deputies and the deceased at the time of the shooting was at least eight to nine feet; (2) an expert opinion that proper police procedure was to secure the premises; (3) an opportunity to examine the gun; and (4) an opportunity to investigate the trajectory of the shot. Assuming that the distance was eight to nine feet, an immediate threat to safety remains in the living room that measures eight by ten feet. The expert opinion on police procedure is not conclusive as to whether the officers' actions are "objectively reasonable" anyway. *See Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386 (1989). Finally, an examination of the trajectory of the shot would appear to be evidence only to contradict the officers' testimony concerning the direction of the shot.

## II.

In order to sustain a section 1983 claim, one must show that: (1) the conduct was under color of state law; (2) the conduct deprived the plaintiff of constitutional rights; and (3) the deprivation occurred without due process of law. *Nishiyama v. Dickson County, Tenn.*, 814 F.2d 277, 279 (6th Cir. 1987)(en banc). The plaintiff claims that her fourth amendment rights were violated when the officers entered the home without a warrant. However, there were consent and exigent circumstances, each of which

allows a warrantless entry of the dwelling.

The plaintiff asserts that the officers failed to prove that they obtained consent to enter from one who had the authority to consent. She argues that the consent exception to the warrant requirement does not apply, because Shari was a third party who had no interest in the West home and was not a co-habitant of the premises. *See Moffett v. Wainwright*, 512 F.2d 496 (5th Cir. 1975) (defendant's girlfriends did not have sufficient rights to the premises to consent to a search).

However, the *Moffett* case is distinguishable. In the present case, there was an invitation by Shari to enter the premises. She had the apparent authority to consent to the entry, as she had from that address previously contacted police and admitted to residing there on occasion. Third party consent "does not rest upon the law of property ... but rests rather on mutual use of the property by persons generally having joint access or control...." *United States v. Matlock*, 415 U.S. 164, 171 n.7 (1974). Shari had mutual use of the premises and referred to the residence as her home address.

The plaintiff also argues that the exigent circumstances exception does not apply because: (1) the officers observed that Shari was unharmed; (2) there was no immediate danger observed upon arrival; and (3) there would have been no danger if the officers had removed Shari from the alleged area of danger.

However, the officers were entitled to search a private dwelling without a warrant, if they were responding to an emergency. *United States v. Dart*, 747 F.2d 263, 267 (4th Cir. 1984). The telephone call indicated that Shari was being pursued by a man with a knife. Furthermore, upon arrival the officers verified that an emergency existed which posed a real danger to the police and public. Accordingly, even if Shari's consent was invalid, exigent circumstances existed which permitted a warrantless entry.

## III.

The plaintiff argues that the officers used excessive force and created the need for such force. A section 1983 claim exists if an officer acting under the color of state law "intentionally does something unreasonable with disregard to a known risk or a high probability that harm will follow." *Nishiyama v. Dickson County, Tenn.*, *supra*. Nonetheless, deadly force may be used "[w]here the officer has probable cause to believe that the suspect poses a threat of serious physical harm, either to the officer or to others." *Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1, 11 (1985).

The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene rather than the 20/20 vision of hindsight.... [and] the question is whether the officers' actions are 'objectively reasonable' in light of the facts and circumstances confronting them, without regard to their underlying intent or motivation.

*Graham*, 490 U.S. at 396-97. As West advanced upon the officers and Shari with a raised machete, despite several warnings to halt, McDannel was justified in using deadly force. Furthermore, the fact that the officers entered the home with Shari in order to apprehend West did not amount to gross negligence under *Nishiyama*.

## IV.

The plaintiff argues that gross errors in police procedure occurred and that the Sheriff's Department failed to properly train and supervise its deputies. However, the Sheriff's Department is not a legal entity subject to suit, *Kurz v. Michigan*, 548 F.2d 172, 174 (6th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 434 U.S. 972 (1977), nor is the sheriff responsible for the misconduct of the deputies. Mich. Comp. Laws § 51.70 (1990). As to the officers' individual capacities, they are each entitled to qualified

immunity. Qualified immunity exists for governmental officials who perform discretionary functions unless their conduct violates clearly established constitutional rights of another. *Harlow v. Fitzgerald*, 457 U.S. 800 (1982). When West approached the officers with a machete, McDannel justifiably acted in defense of himself and others.

## V.

The plaintiff argues that the district judge showed hostility and lack of impartiality toward plaintiff's counsel. It is alleged that the judge admonished counsel for filing cases without knowing the law and stated "Mr. Yingst, put your pencil down, I am talking to you! That is very disrespectful!" The plaintiff cites 28 U.S.C. §§ 144 and 455(a) which state that a judge may be disqualified or recuse himself from a case where personal bias or prejudice exists against a party or for an opponent.

The plaintiff has the burden to convince a reasonable man that bias exists. *United States v. Story*, 716 F.2d 1088 (6th Cir. 1983). The plaintiff has failed to establish objective evidence of "personal" bias. *Knapp v. Kinsey*, 232 F.2d 458, 466 (6th Cir.), cert. denied, 352 U.S. 892 (1956). The judge's admonishment of counsel exhibited frustration, but not bias or prejudice toward the plaintiff's case.

Finding no error in the proceedings below, the district court judgment is AFFIRMED.

## APPENDIX B

### UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT

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**Case Nos. 90-1160, 90-1161**

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TONYA RHODES, Personal Representative of the Estate  
of JAMES EDWARD WEST, Deceased  
Plaintiff-Appellant Cross-Appellee  
v.

CRAIG McDANNEL; H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official ca-  
pacity as Van Buren County Sheriff; VAN BUREN COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; VAN BUREN COUNTY  
Defendants-Appellees Cross-Appellants

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**FILED**  
**SEP 10, 1991**  
**LEONARD GREEN, Clerk**

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### ORDER

Upon consideration of the appellees' motion to publish  
the court's June 10, 1991 decision in these cases,

It is ORDERED that the motion be, and it hereby is,  
GRANTED.

ENTERED BY ORDER OF THE COURT  
Leonard Green, Clerk

## APPENDIX C

### NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FULL TEXT PUBLICATION

Sixth Circuit Rule 24 limits citation to specific situations. Please see Rule 24 before citing in a proceeding in a court in the Sixth Circuit. If cited, a copy must be served on other parties and the Court. This notice is to be prominently displayed if this decision is reproduced.

### IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT

—  
No. 90-1160/61  
—

TONYA RHODES,

Plaintiff-Appellant.

v.

CRAIG McDANNEL, ET AL.,

Defendants-Appellees.

—  
ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT  
COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

—  
FILED  
JUN 10 1991  
LEONARD GREEN, Clerk

—  
Before: RYAN and SUHRHEINRICH, Circuit Judges; and  
SILER, Chief District Judge.\*

—  
\* The Honorable Eugene E. Silr, Jr., Chief United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky and United States District Judge for the Western District of Kentucky, sitting by designation.

PER CURIAM. The appellant Tonya Rhodes, representative of the estate of James E. West (hereinafter "plaintiff"), in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action appeals a summary judgment entered by the district court in favor of the appellees Deputy Sheriff Craig McDannel, Sheriff H. Cal Rosema, and the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department.

This case arises out of a shooting incident that occurred at the home of the late James West in Hartford, Michigan. On March 7, 1989, the Hartford Police Department was telephoned by Shari Heffington (Shari)<sup>1</sup> who stated that West was chasing her around the home with a machete. Deputies McDannel and Shaw went to the door of West's home and were met by Shari. Deputies Lux and Craft remained outside the home to secure the perimeter. Shari informed the officers that West was in the home and threatening her with a knife. Shari escorted the officers into the living room when West entered the room and advanced with a machete toward Shari and the two officers. Several times the officers ordered West to drop the knife, but West failed to heed the warnings. When he advanced within a distance of four to six feet with the machete raised, McDannel fired his weapon and killed West.

Plaintiff raised two issues before the district court on the merits of the case: gross negligence by McDannel and the use of unreasonable deadly force. The court granted summary judgment for the defendants. On the first issue (gross negligence), relying on *Jones v. Sherrill*, 827 F.2d 1102, 1106 (6th Cir. 1987), it ruled that the undisputed facts negate any gross negligence on the part of the deputies. On the second issue (unreasonable deadly force), it held as a matter of law that the deadly force used was not unreasonable, in light of the undisputed facts that

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<sup>1</sup> There was some evidence in the record that the caller may have been Junior Heffington, Shari's father.

West advanced toward the officers with a machete that had a 24-inch blade, that he raised it after ignoring a warning to drop it, and that he got within four to six feet of the officers before he was shot. In addition, the plaintiff moved for a recusal of the judge. The trial court denied the motion for failure to assert facts sufficient for recusal under 23 U.S.C. §§ 144 and 455(a). For the following reasons, we affirm.

## I.

The first issue is whether the plaintiff was given sufficient opportunity for discovery prior to the entry of summary judgment. The district court has broad discretion in regulating discovery, and its ruling will not be overturned unless there is a clear abuse of discretion. *Misco, Inc. v. United States Steel Corp.*, 784 F.2d 198 (6th Cir. 1986); see also *Little v. City of Seattle*, 863 F.2d 681 (9th Cir. 1988).

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The plaintiff asserts that the officers failed to prove that they obtained consent to enter from one who had the authority to consent. She argues that the consent exception to the warrant requirement does not apply, because Shari was a third party who had no interest in the West home and was not a co-habitant of the premises. *See Moffett v. Wainwright*, 512 F.2d 496 (5th Cir. 1975) (defendant's girl friends did not have sufficient rights to the premises to consent to a search).

However, the *Moffett* case is distinguishable. In the present case, there was an invitation by Shari to enter the premises. She had the apparent authority to consent to the entry, as she had from that address previously contacted police and admitted to residing there on occasion. Third party consent "does not rest upon the law of property . . . but rests rather on mutual use of the property by persons generally having joint access or control . . ." *United States v. Matlock*, 415 U.S. 164, 171 n.7 (1974). Shari had mutual use of the premises and referred to the residence as her home address.

The plaintiff also argues that the exigent circumstances exception does not apply because: (1) the officers observed that Shari was unharmed; (2) there was no immediate danger observed upon arrival; and (3) there would have been

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The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene rather than 20/20 vision of hindsight .... [and] the question is whether the officers' actions are 'objectively reasonable' in light of the facts and circumstances confronting them, without regard to their underlying intent or motivation.

*Graham*, 490 U.S. at 396-97. As West advanced upon the officers and Shari with a raised machete, despite several warnings to halt, McDannel was justified in using deadly force. Furthermore, the fact that the officers entered the

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#### V.

The plaintiff argues that the district judge showed hostility and lack of impartiality toward plaintiff's counsel. It is alleged that the judge admonished counsel for filing cases without knowing the law and stated "Mr. Yingst, put your pencil down. I am talking to you! That is very disrespectful!" The plaintiff cites 28 U.S.C. §§ 144 and 455(a) which state that a judge may be disqualified or recuse himself from a case where personal bias or prejudice exists against a party or for an opponent.

The plaintiff has the burden to convince a reasonable man that bias exists. *United States v. Story*, 716 F.2d 1088 (6th Cir. 1983). The plaintiff has failed to establish objective evidence of "personal bias. *Knapp v. Kinsey*, 232 F.2d 458, 466 (6th Cir. 1956), *cert. denied*, 352 U.S. 892 (1956).

The judge's admonishment of counsel exhibited frustration, but not bias or prejudice toward the plaintiff's case.

Finding no error in the proceedings below, the district court judgment is AFFIRMED.

ISSUED AS MANDATE: August 7, 1991

COSTS: NONE

A TRUE COPY

Attest:

LEONARD GREEN, Clerk  
By /s/ Sharon R. Tallaugo  
Deputy Clerk

**APPENDIX D**

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT**

**No. 90-1160/61**

TONYA RHODES, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
ESTATE OF JAMES EDWARD WEST, DECEASED,  
Plaintiff/Appellant/Cross- Appellee,  
v.

CRAIG McDANNEL; H. CAL ROSEMA, IN HIS OFFICIAL  
CAPACITY AS VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF; VAN  
BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; VAN BUREN  
COUNTY,  
Defendants-Appellees/Cross-Appellants

**FILED  
JUL 30 1991  
LEONARD GREEN, Clerk**

**ORDER**

BEFORE: RYAN and SUHRHEINRICH, Circuit Judges; and  
SILER\*, Chief Judge, United States District  
Court.

The court having received a petition for rehearing en banc, and the petition having been circulated not only to the original panel members but also to all other active judges of this court, and no judge of this court having

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\* Hon. Eugene E. Siler, Jr. sitting by designation from the Eastern District of Kentucky.

requested a vote on the suggestion for rehearing en banc, the petition for rehearing has been referred to the original hearing panel.

The panel has further reviewed the petition for rehearing and concludes that the issues raised in the petition were fully considered upon the original submission and decision of the case. Accordingly, the petition is denied.

ENTERED BY ORDER OF THE COURT

/s/ Leonard Green  
Leonard Green, Clerk

APPENDIX E

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
SOUTHERN DIVISION

File No. G-89-50761-CA

TONYA RHODES, Personal Representative of the Estate  
of James Edward West, Deceased

Plaintiff,

vs.

CRAIG McDANIEL, H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official capacity as Van Buren County Sheriff, VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT and VAN BUREN COUNTY,  
jointly and severally,

Defendants.

**Motion for Summary Judgment**

Before

THE HONORABLE ROBERT HOLMES BELL  
U.S. District Judge  
November 21, 1989

PRESENT:

ROBERT A. YINGST (P22624)  
9047-4 U.S. 31 North, P.O. Box 268  
Berrien Springs, MI 49103  
Attorney for Plaintiff

RICHARD H. WINSLOW (P22449)  
401 Comerica Building  
Battle Creek, MI 49017  
Attorney for Defendants

Kevin W. Gaugier, CSR-3065  
U.S. District Court Reporter

### PROCEEDINGS

THE COURT: The first matter of the morning on the record is the matter of Rhodes versus McDannel, et al. This is our file 89-50761-CA by number. This is the Defendants' motion for summary judgment or dismissal, and it's also a time set for a status conference. This Court is adjourning the status conference portion of the hearing today for potentially a later day. Mr. Yingst represents the Plaintiff; Mr. Winslow, I believe, represents the Defendant.

Mr. Winslow, you may be heard on your motion.

MR. WINSLOW: Thank you. Your Honor. I know the Court has had the opportunity to review our motion, the accompanying brief, and the deposition of Tonya Rhodes. I know the Court does not expect me to read the motion at this time.

THE COURT: No, no.

MR. WINSLOW: So let me simply respond to the Plaintiff's answer to the motion, if I may.

I believe that the Plaintiff's analysis is inappropriate of whether or not we are talking about a threshold consent to search issue. Most of the cases that he cites in response seem to try to cast this issue in terms of whether or not the officers could effectuate a constitutional search of Mr. West's property based upon Tonya Rhodes' consent to allow us to come in. We were not going in the house to conduct a search.

THE COURT: We or your client?

MR. WINSLOW: My client, Craig McDannel, and if he is able to amend his complaint, Brad Shaw as well. Craig

McDannel went into the house along with Brad Shaw upon invitation.

THE COURT: As I understand it, there's no dispute that this particular woman invited them in; correct?

MR. WINSLOW: I know of no facts to dispute that statement.

THE COURT: I mean, there may be allegations, but there's no evidence, is there?

MR. WINSLOW: Not that I know of, Your Honor. We've taken depositions of virtually everybody available that would have any knowledge, and both Brad Shaw and Craig McDannel are consistent in what they say happen, and the statement of Shari Heffington I think is pretty much absent on that issue of going into detail about what happened as they crossed into the house. Her statement seems to deal primarily with what happened once they were in the house. There's nothing in her statement that refutes what Craig McDannel and Brad Shaw say.

So I think that the proper format or the proper form of the issue is once they were inside the house upon invitation of Shari Heffington, did they have a right, a duty or an obligation to use deadly force under the circumstances that existed. As far as I can tell, there is no dispute that Mr. West was approaching them with a machete, and although words don't describe in the deposition—don't describe very well just how the machete was being held, it was described in the deposition by the witnesses, and basically the way it was is Mr. West was coming toward them with the handle in his right hand of the machete with the blade pointed down toward the floor; and as he was approaching them, within six feet or so, and walking steadily toward them, not responding to their orders for him to stop and to drop the machete, he raised the machete up by bringing his forearm up. As it became parallel with the floor and was continuing to come up, the

blade would still be pointed down, the point would still be pointed down with the blade toward him, but it would be coming up in the direction of being able to direct the blade toward what appeared to be Shari Heffington at the time.

The statement that the point was pointed away from the officers doesn't fully describe the situation. It was a coming up with the knife as though to plunge it downward. It was getting into that position so it could be plunged downward, and only as that was happening was he warned he had another time to stop, and when he didn't slow down or do anything different, his knife was coming up, according to McDannel, at the point he had his arm parallel with the floor and was coming up with it, he fired. And according to Brad Shaw, who was standing right next to him, the shot seemed to have occurred as his hand was about even with his neck.

THE COURT: Your position is no dispute on that?

MR. WINSLOW: I know of no dispute from any facts, Your Honor. I attached all the police reports.

THE COURT: Four people there, one of them is dead, two of them your clients, and the other one is this woman who can't be found or she's not around?

MR. WINSLOW: Well, Brad Shaw is not yet my client. If he is joined to this suit, he would be my client. He is an employee of the Van Buren Sheriff's Department, but yes.

THE COURT: His deposition has been taken, though?

MR. WINSLOW: Yes, that's the position, and his deposition has been taken.

THE COURT: Not inconsistent with your client at all?

MR. WINSLOW: I don't believe there's any inconsistency. The only inconsistency is McDannel thought that he was ready to shoot or going to shoot as the arm was parallel

to the ground, and Brad Shaw said when he fired, it was a little higher when the shot was actually fired. But I don't see that as a conflict.

THE COURT: No.

MR. WINSLOW: The officers entered the house with their guns holstered. They did not enter with a display that would threaten anybody. They went in because they were invited in and were determined to find out what was going on with this reported domestic dispute that Shari Heffington was being chased around the house by a man with a knife.

They had, I suppose, two alternatives. Plaintiffs suggest a third. They had the alternative of what they did, and that was to shoot him. Another alternative was to see was he actually going to stab somebody, which I think would be a gross violation of Shari Heffington's rights. She was there believing she was protected by the police, had every reason to believe she would be protected by the police, and we had a responsibility and obligation to her to protect her civil rights and to keep her from harm. That is a major portion of the officers' responsibilities.

Plaintiff suggests a third alternative, and that is they could have tried to hightail it out of the room. At the point where it appeared that West was not going to relent, was not going to give up his assault, he was four to six feet away. You have a blade on a machete that's two feet long, the reach of a man's arm is at least two feet long. So he was very close to being in striking distance when they finally shot him or when Craig McDannel finally shot him, and he was still walking toward him, closing that space. For three people to get out of that room at once where the door opened inward into the room, where they could not just push it and race out of the house, they would have to open the door toward them, wait for the door to be opened wide enough and then exit single file,

I don't think is a requirement of law that is reasonable under the circumstances.

They had a reasonable belief that what they had to do at that point was to protect themselves and to protect Shari Heffington. I think that our analysis of what a reasonable officer would believe was necessary under the circumstances does not allow for debate. There's simply only one thing an officer can do at that point, and I believe at this juncture it is an issue of law for the Court to decide that the officer is entitled to qualified immunity and was entitled at that time to exercise his right of self-defense. He does not have a duty to run from danger. His job is a dangerous one, and it places him in danger day after day. That's just the nature of it. Every time someone threatens an officer, they can't run away and be doing their job.

Plaintiff also suggests in the verified complaint that the training was so deficient as to demonstrate gross negligence on the part of the training and supervision, that it was so deficient as to make the violation of a person's civil rights substantially certain to occur; and, therefore, violates the Plaintiff's civil rights. The way he attempts to do that is by referring to specific questions of whether or not the officer was trained in how to handle a domestic dispute involving violence. The officer said, No, there's not training on how to handle a domestic dispute involving violence. But I don't think that that question and answer sequence says that they were not trained to handle situations of violence in general.

The questioning went on in the deposition to the effect that they have to handle each domestic situation as it occurs, as it arises. Each one's different, and that a violent situation is really a violent situation whether or not it occurs in the context of a domestic situation or whether it occurs at a traffic stop on the highway or at a liquor store holdup or anything else. The requirements of the

officer to respond to violence is not determined by whether or not it occurs in the context of a domestic dispute. It is also, I believe, not defined by whether or not they are in the Plaintiff's own home when they have to defend themselves, because the Plaintiff clearly had not right to use deadly force against anybody, even in his own home, when they did not enter the home by using deadly force.

Shari Heffington gave every appearance of being rightfully in possession, and the reason I attached some of those prior police reports was not, as Plaintiff suggests, to try to poison the Court, but because there was some interesting information in there. The first one that I attached was a September 10, 1988 report. Shari Heffington was complaining against James West. He had assaulted her then. She had hit him on the head with a beer bottle to make him break off the assault. The reason I attached the report is because it shows that Shari Heffington resides at 310 South East Street, Hartford, Michigan; that James Edward West resides at 310 South East Street, Hartford, Michigan; that the incident occurred at the same home that the incident occurred when Mr. West was fatally wounded. The other report that I dealt with—

THE COURT: But you're not contending and you haven't contended, nor do you have any deposition to contend that the officers, when answering this call, were apprised of these previous police reports and all this information, do you?

MR. WINSLOW: That's correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Assuming that's an issue here.

MR. WINSLOW: What I was doing is responding to the Plaintiff's argument that Shari Heffington was nothing more than a trespasser in the house and had no authority to allow us into the house. That would not appear to be borne out by the facts.

THE COURT: That's not a valid argument. She's an adult, isn't she?

MR. WINSLOW: I beg your pardon?

THE COURT: She's an adult, isn't she?

MR. WINSLOW: Yes, she is.

THE COURT: The police aren't to go to the door and say, Who are you, and show me the title to this property and show me the lease. That's absurd. That's not a valid argument.

MR. WINSLOW: Your Honor, I raised about 11 issues in my brief. I don't think that many other of these issues have to be gone into unless you have questions that you'd like me to address.

THE COURT: Not now, thank you.

MR. WINSLOW: Thank you.

THE COURT: Mr. Yingst, are you going to argue this?

MR. YINGST: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: This is a 1983 cause of action; is that correct?

MR. YINGST: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. This is governed by, as clear as I can see, Sixth Circuit law under *Jones v. Sherrill*, which I presume and hope you're familiar with. This *Jones v. Sherrill* is a high-speed chase coming out of Tennessee where two police officers, I presume you're familiar with the facts, were chasing a traffic offender apparently at high speed through a metropolitan area, as best I can gather from the facts here, and in the course of chasing this traffic offender, the traffic offender crossed the center line and ran into Mrs. Jones, causing the death of Mrs. Jones, and a lawsuit was begun against the police officers

who were chasing. And if you're listening, let me cite to you Page 1106:

"The government conduct in pursuing Sherrill does not rise to the level of gross negligence and outrageous conduct necessary to sustain a Section 1983 claim under *Nishiyama*.

Put your pen down, would you please? I'm talking to you.

MR. YINGST: I'm sorry, Your Honor. I was writing down—

THE COURT: That's disrespectful.

MR. YINGST:—the cite that you gave. I apologize to the Court.

THE COURT: Well, you should know *Nishiyama* in order to file this lawsuit and the others you've been filing.

"*Nishiyama* did not hold that a mere allegation of gross negligence or aggravated negligence would always be enough to withstand a motion to dismiss. Negligence does not become 'gross' just by saying so. If the courts are to make any sense of the distinction between gross negligence and simple negligence, we must ensure that gross negligence is something more than simple negligence 'with the addition of a vituperative epithet.' The facts alleged in support of the legal conclusion of gross negligence must be sufficient to charge the government officials with outrageous conduct or arbitrary use of government power. The high speed pursuit alleged in Jones's complaint is not sufficient to state a claim under *Nishiyama*.

Now, what I'm interested in in this case is where is the gross negligence, presuming for a moment that there might be an allegation of simple negligence in this case? The only proofs we have are the officers and this woman who apparently is not available and the deceased; correct?

MR. YINGST: At the present time, Your Honor, yes.

THE COURT: Well, that's my evaluation under *Anderson* and *Celotex* and the other cases. Continue.

MR. YINGST: I'm sorry, Your Honor. You asked me a question and I was—I got lost in it and I didn't follow it.

THE COURT: I'm looking for gross negligence in this case. I think that at the time we were here before on this case, I asked the same question.

MR. YINGST: I don't think we've been here before on this case, Your Honor. But the facts in this case, I believe, are different. This is not pursuing a felon or even any knowledge that involved any conduct that the police officers observed. They're going on information that was conveyed by some male caller to the sheriff's department that was related to the police officers.

THE COURT: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. A felonious assault was committed upon these policemen; correct?

MR. YINGST: I don't believe the facts would bear that out, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. The policemen are in this home, and a man comes out of a bedroom into the living room area where the policemen are standing; correct?

MR. YINGST: That's correct, from the testimony, yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That's all I can work from is the testimony, not the allegations.

MR. YINGST: From the testimony, yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All we're talking about is from the testimony. And from the testimony, the knife is moved in a threatening gesture, from the testimony?

MR. YINGST: That is a conclusion that I would contend, Your Honor, that you do not need to infer that it was

threatening. That is Counsel's description of what occurred. There was some conflict in the testimony of the two officers on that point, and there's also conflict as to how far away Mr. West was.

THE COURT: No, let's back up a minute. The man was advancing toward the policemen; correct?

MR. YINGST: Yes.

THE COURT: And he had a knife?

MR. YINGST: Yes.

THE COURT: And he was told three or four different times, Drop the knife?

MR. YINGST: From the testimony of the officers, yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, is there any other testimony?

MR. YINGST: Not at this point, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you have any other witnesses that observed it?

MR. YINGST: Well, of course, there is Shari Heffington, who has not yet been deposed.

THE COURT: Do you have an affidavit from her to the contrary?

MR. YINGST: No, I do not, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. He's advancing on the officers, he's told to drop the knife, and both officers—there is some variance in their testimony, but both officers contend that the arm was in the process of being raised up; correct?

MR. YINGST: Yes. The officer that did the shooting contended that the knife was pointing to the floor. The officer who did not do the shooting claimed that it was higher.

THE COURT: But it was in the process of being raised.

MR. YINGST: That's correct, Your Honor. That is their testimony.

THE COURT: What is missing? You know, what is missing in the elements of a felonious assault?

MR. YINGST: In terms of whether or not Mr. West was actually assaulting them is a judgment call on the part of the officers and on the part of whoever's going to determine that that is the fact. When he is coming out of the room, from their own testimony, at that point there is no claim that he was engaged in a felony or that they had seen a felony in their presence, and coming out of the room under the circumstances as they were then did not justify believing that he was anything other than a person in his own home who had a legal right to be there. And the distance—the conduct of the officers in determining whether or not their conduct was subjectively reasonable would take into account a number of factors. One important one is in dispute, which is how far away he was when this shot occurred.

THE COURT: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I don't know if we live in the same world. He's coming, he's leaving the bedroom or this other room with a knife, big knife, 24-inch blade, machete.

MR. YINGST: Yes.

THE COURT: No dispute?

MR. YINGST: No dispute.

THE COURT: He's coming toward two uniformed officers. No dispute?

MR. YINGST: I would have to say no dispute, yes.

THE COURT: These aren't difficult issues, are they, factually?

MR. YINGST: Well, where they were standing and how the room is set up, there is, because coming out of the

room does not—it's not a simple matter that he just walked out of the room and walked directly toward the officers.

THE COURT: No, no. He had to walk through the room, it was actually two rooms in length.

MR. YINGST: He never got to the other room. He had to maneuver around a couch, and if he was shot as soon as he came out of this room where the door that covered up the bullet that is alleged to have killed him was all splattered with blood, the argument of where he was at that point, whether he was further than where they—where the testimony is in dispute. They claim four to six feet. The distance when he first walked out of that door is much further than four to six feet.

THE COURT: Do we have any testimony other than their testimony in this case?

MR. YINGST: The police officers? Not at this point, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Go ahead and argue.

MR. YINGST: We have spent a great deal of time, Your Honor, compiling a brief and comparing exhibits for the Court, and copies of the deposition testimony were submitted to the Court. It is my claim, Your Honor, that the cases that we have cited adequately apprise the Court of our authority that we rely upon, and the emphasis that I would say that the Court should focus on in making any decision at this point would be *Canton v. Harris* and *McKinnon v. Berwyn* which were cited in our brief. On the issue particularly of gross negligence that the Court raised, *McKinnon* addresses that, which I think contained facts more analogous to this case.

I want to say again, Your Honor, that at this point we have not concluded discovery. The experts that we have talked to and the evidence that we have gotten from the State Police on how the shot occurred raises serious ques-

tions as to how the shooting—whether the shooting occurred the way the police officers say it did.

The defense at this point in attempting to argue the objective reasonableness standard based on what occurred inside the house, there are two separate considerations here for the Court in determining both subjective reasonable—determining objective reasonableness and how the police officers became involved in that situation and entered the house is part of what I believe the Court should consider. In response to some of Mr. Winslow's comments, I've heard the Court's comments on whether or not the consent could be properly given and whether or not the justification to go in the house was proper. I won't go over that. I think we've laid it out in our brief.

THE COURT: But do you have any evidence in this case? I mean, I have a trilogy of cases from the United States Supreme Court in 1986 telling me the standard to use in summary judgment. It's different than in the state court. It's much different than that. Is there any evidence—affidavits, tape recordings, photographs—that contradict the officers' testimony as to why they were at this residence and how they got into the residence?

MR. YINGST: Other than what we have submitted to the Court at this point, Your Honor, I have none other to give to the Court.

THE COURT: No, that doesn't answer my question. Do you have any evidence contradicting the officers?

MR. YINGST: I believe what we have submitted does contradict the officers in terms of the inference the Court would have to draw from what they have said. For example, the police report contends in the one instance that there are no powder burns on this man's shirt.

THE COURT: No, no. As to why the officers were where they were at the time that the incident took place, as to how they got to the residence and how they got into the

residence and what their purpose for being there was, is there any contradiction as to that from the officers' testimony thus far, any?

MR. YINGST: The way the Court has asked the question, I can't answer it directly. I believe that if the Court is saying did they arrive there in response to a call, yes, I believe that is borne out by their testimony, and we have nothing to contradict that.

THE COURT: That was my question.

MR. YINGST: Sir?

THE COURT: That was my question.

MR. YINGST: All right. On what was actually said and how the officers decided that it was appropriate under those circumstances to enter the home, that is not at all clear.

Now, do we have someone to say categorically to the contrary, they didn't have any right to go in there, they shouldn't have gone in there under the circumstances, we do, as the Court has noted, have opinion testimony on that, but that is not a factual—those are not fact witnesses. We do have opinion testimony from one of the leading police experts in the country, whose opinion it is that the entry on the basis of the facts that were contained in the police reports and the statements by the officers at that time was unreasonable and grossly negligent under these circumstances.

THE COURT: Is that Mr. West's brother-in-law?

MR. YINGST: No, that's Dr. Kirkham.

THE COURT: Do we have his affidavit in here?

MR. YINGST: Yes. I believe it's Exhibit Number 12 of our brief, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Continue.

MR. YINGST: The other thing is, Your Honor, that although we requested by subpoena all of the policies and procedures of the Van Buren Sheriff's Department, we were not provided all of them. What we were provided, we submitted to the Court. It is my understanding that there are no other policies that would be relevant to the issues that are before the Court in this matter, and that to the extent that the policies exclude any training, it is our contention that failure to train in the particular areas that we've alleged in our brief is a basis for a factual determination as to whether or not there was gross negligence. I believe we have set it out in the documents that we have submitted to the Court and in the brief I submitted.

Unless the Court has any further question, that is all that I would say at this time, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Response?

MR. WINSLOW: Well, I would only point out, Your Honor, that with respect to the last point, that the so-called reckless disregard of training and supervision would only be an issue if, first of all, there was an improper use of deadly force; and second of all, if the improper use of deadly force was caused by the lack of training or supervision. Here that doesn't seem to be a reasonable interpretation or inference from the facts.

Does the Court have any questions of me?

THE COURT: No, no. Thank you. Thank you, both of you.

I intend to write on this matter. I have some of my ideas already sketched out. A couple issues here have been raised I want to go back and pursue in this case. I want to follow through with some more law here on this gross negligence issue. I'm troubled by it in this case, very can-

didly, and I should have something together certainly within the next 30 days and it should be on its way to you, my opinion in this matter, very shortly. Thank you, both of you. (Proceedings concluded at 9:30 a.m.)

**CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER**

I, Kevin W. Gaugier, Official Court Reporter for the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, appointed pursuant to the provisions of Title 28, United States Code, Section 753, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings had in the within-entitled and numbered cause on the date hereinbefore set forth.

I do further certify that the foregoing transcript was prepared by me.

/s/ Kevin W. Gaugier  
U.S. District Court Reporter  
315 W. Allegan St.  
Lansing, MI 48933

## APPENDIX F

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION

FILE NO. G89-50761-CA

Hon. Robert Holmes Bell

TONYA RHODES, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE ESTATE OF JAMES EDWARD WEST,  
DECEASED,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

CRAIG McDANNEL, H. CAL ROSEMA,  
in his official capacity as  
VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF,  
VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT, and VANBUREN COUNTY,  
Jointly and Severally,

*Defendants.*

### OPINION OF THE COURT

Plaintiff, James West's daughter, brings this action as personal representative of the Estate of James West, Deceased, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988. Plaintiff claims that defendant Craig McDannel deprived West of his civil rights by the unreasonable use of deadly force. Plaintiff claims that the remaining defendants deprived West of his civil rights by failing to properly train and supervise defendant McDannel. Now before the Court is defendants' motion to strike and dismiss plaintiff's complaint and application for sanctions.

The following facts are undisputed. On March 7, 1989 at approximately 11:00 p.m., the Van Buren County Sher-

iff's Department received a call that a woman was being chased around a house on East Street in Hartford, Michigan by a man with a knife. Two cars containing Deputies McDannel, Shaw, Lux and Craft responded. Deputies Lux and Craft secured the outside of the house and Deputies McDannel and Shaw went to the door. The complainant, Sherri Heffington, West's girlfriend, met McDannel and Shaw at the door and invited them into the house. Heffington indicated that West was still in the house and still had the knife but that she did not know where he was.

While McDannel and Shaw were in the living room, West entered the living room area from a back bedroom. Deputy Shaw drew his gun when he saw what he believed to be a gun in West's hand. Deputy McDannel drew his gun when he saw that West was holding a knife with a 24" blade. The officers told West five or six times to drop the knife and to stop his advance. West did neither. West continued forward and began raising the knife. The officers again told West to stop and drop the knife. West did not drop the knife and continued toward Heffington and the officers. When West was four to six feet from Heffington and the officers, McDannel fired his weapon at West.<sup>1</sup> West was hit in the chest and died from his wounds.

Fed.R.Civ.P. 12(b) provides that, if on a Rule 12(b)(6) motion matters outside the pleadings are submitted to the Court and the Court considers them, the Court shall treat the motion as one for summary judgment under Fed.R.Civ.P. 56. Both plaintiff and defendants have submitted documents outside the pleadings in support of their arguments. The Court has considered those documents and will treat this motion as one for summary judgment.

On a motion for summary judgment, the Court reviews the evidence in a light most favorable to the nonmoving

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<sup>1</sup> Plaintiff suggests that the distance might be different but has not come forward with any facts to support a greater or lesser distance.

party. The moving party has the burden of showing the Court that "there is an absence of evidence to support the nonmoving party's case." *Celotex v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 325, 106 S.Ct. 2548, 91 L.Ed.2d 265, 275 (1986). The nonmoving party must present the Court with specific facts which demonstrate that there is a genuine issue for trial. *Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 587, 106 S.Ct. 1348, 89 L.Ed.2d 538, 552 (1986). Summary judgment is precluded if there is a dispute with regard to a fact "that might affect the outcome of the suit." *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248, 106 S.Ct. 2505, 91 L.Ed.2d 202, 211 (1986).

Defendants argue that McDannel was privileged to use the force he did and that he is immune from liability in this case. In her response to defendants' motion, plaintiff alleged two bases for defendant McDannel's liability. Plaintiff stated:

Defendant McDannel is liable (1) for creating the situation which caused the need for alleged self defense, and (2) for the actual use of unnecessary deadly force.

With regard to the first basis for liability, plaintiff argues that defendant McDannel was negligent because he failed to plan the approach to this situation, failed to remove Heffington from the house at the first opportunity and failed to retreat when approached by West. Plaintiff alleges that these failures, in addition to the use of deadly force, amounted to gross negligence. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals has stated:

Negligence does not become "gross" just by saying so. If the courts are to make any sense of the distinction between gross negligence and simple negligence, we must ensure that gross negligence is something more than simple negligence "with the addition of an vituperative epithet." *Wilson v. Brett*, 11 M. & W. 113, 152

Eng. Rep. 737 (Ex. 1843). The facts alleged in support of the legal conclusion of gross negligence must be sufficient to charge the government officials with outrageous conductor arbitrary use of government power.

*Jones v. Sherrill*, 827 F.2d 1102, 1106 (6th Cir. 1987). An earlier Sixth Circuit case set forth a definition of "gross negligence." The Court stated:

We acknowledge that the term "gross negligence" evades easy definition. In our view, a person may be said to act in such a way as to trigger a section 1983 claim if he intentionally does something unreasonable with disregard to a known risk or a risk so obvious that he must be assumed to have been aware of it, and of a magnitude such that it is highly probable that harm will follow.

*Nishiyama v. Dickson County, Tenn.*, 814 F.2d 277, 282 (6th Cir. 1987).

In a case which is almost on point with the instant case, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals found that it was not gross negligence for police officers not to consider all of the alternatives available to them. *Brandenburg v. Cureton*, 882 F.2d 211, 214, (6th Cir. 1989). In *Brandenburg*, three police officers went to the Brandenburg property to serve a peace warrant. The warrant was issued the day before the officers attempted to serve it. The officers had been warned by the persons seeking the peace warrant that there "might be trouble." The officers did not make any preparation or plan for how they might serve the warrant. The Court found that such lack of preparation did not rise above the level of mere negligence. *Id.* In the instant case, the police officers were responding to a call about a incident occurring at that time and were told that a woman was being chased by a man with a knife. The failure of the officers to take an alternative action in a response

situation certainly does not rise to a level of negligence higher than that in *Brandenburg*. Defendant McDannel's failure to formulate a plan of action does not rise to the level of gross negligence.

Plaintiff further argues that defendant McDannel was grossly negligent in going into the house with Heffington. Defendant McDannel, at the time, believed that there was a man with a knife in the house. Therefore, defendant McDannel did take a risk when entering the house. However, the Court finds that the risk was not "of a magnitude such that it is highly probable that harm will follow." *Nichiyama*, 814 F.2d at 282. If defendant McDannel's information had been that the man had a gun, the Court might, under the right circumstances, find that defendant McDannel's entry into the house was an act that was more than merely negligent. In this case, the Court finds that it is not "highly probable" that a man with a knife would continue to advance on two officers who had guns drawn. Defendant McDannel's actions in entering the house were not grossly negligent.

Plaintiff argues that defendant McDannel should have retreated rather than confront West when West continued his advance. Plaintiff does not provide the Court with any legal basis to support his contention that a police officer must retreat when faced with a threat. Defendant McDannel's action in staying in the house does not constitute gross negligence.

Finally, plaintiff argues that defendant McDannel's use of deadly force was unreasonable. "The use of deadly force is reasonable if an officer believes that there is a threat of serious physical harm to the officer or others." *Brandenburg*, 882 F.2d at 215. There is no dispute that West continued to advance toward the officers with a knife with a 24 inch blade in spite of several warnings to stop and drop the knife. There is also no dispute that West was raising the knife when he was shot. The only facts that

plaintiff raises to dispute the reasonableness of defendant McDannel's actions are that West had not raised the knife all the way up, that West was suffering from disabling arthritis in his hands, that West had the knife in his right hand and West was left handed, that the knife could not have fallen on the couch after West was shot and that there is a question as to whether the bedroom door was open or closed when West was shot. Further, in her supplemental brief in opposition to defendants' motion, plaintiff attaches the affidavit of a criminologist which stated that the "trajectory and position of the shooter" is different than that stated by the officers. None of these facts are facts "that might affect the outcome of the suit." *Anderson, supra*. None of these facts dispute the fact that West was raising a knife with a 24 inch blade while advancing on the officers.

The only "fact" raised by plaintiff which might have a bearing on the level of negligence attributed to defendant McDannel is the affidavit of the criminologist. However, even that "fact" only suggests that West and McDannel were in different positions. It does not dispute the fact that West was advancing on the officers with a knife with a 24 inch blade. Plaintiff would have the Court speculate that this "evidence" leads to an inference that the positions of West and defendant McDannel were sufficiently different to lead to the conclusion that defendant McDannel was guilty of gross negligence. This "fact," as well as the inferences plaintiff would have the Court make from the facts in the previous paragraph, seems designed to cast doubt on the credibility of the officers. Neither this "fact" or the inferences raises a question as to the level of negligence involved. Plaintiff, as the nonmoving party, "must do more than simply show that there is some metaphysical doubt as to the material facts." *Matsushita*, 475

U.S. at 586, 89 L.Ed.2d at 552. Defendants' motion for summary judgment will be granted.<sup>2</sup>

Defendants seek Rule 11 sanctions against plaintiff because plaintiff stated in her deposition that she did not personally know the facts stated in her complaint. Plaintiff argues that she relied on the information supplied by the investigation of her attorneys. Plaintiff's attorneys also attached affidavits to their brief in opposition to defendants' motion for sanctions which detailed the investigation and research which had been done.

Fed.R.Civ.P. 11 required that every pleading, motion, or other paper of a party be signed by at least one attorney of record in the attorney's individual name or the party if appearing pro per. The signature constitutes a certification that the attorney or party has: (1) read the document, (2) that to the best of the signer's knowledge, information, and belief derived from reasonable inquiry, that the document is (3) well grounded in fact and (4) warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law, and (5) that the document is not interposed for any improper purpose such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needlessly increase the cost of litigation. Thus, violations may arise from a deficient inquiry into the factual and legal basis for a pleading, motion, or other paper, or from an improper purpose.

Rule 11 has several purposes: to penalize the offender, to compensate the offended, and to deter the offending party and others from abusing litigation. However, the primary purpose of Rule 11 is to deter abusive litigation. See Notes of the Advisory Committee on Rules, 1983 Amendments ("ACN"). 97 F.R.D. 197; S. Kassin, *An Empirical Study of the Rule 11 Sanctions* 29 (Federal Judicial Center 1985).

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<sup>2</sup> In light of this dispositive opinion, the court will not rule on defendants' motion for protective order filed December 8, 1989.

According to the Advisory Committee on Rules, the rule was not designed to "chill an attorney's enthusiasm or creativity in pursuing factual or legal theories." Further, courts "should test the signer's conduct by inquiring what was reasonable to believe at the time the pleading, motion, or other paper was submitted." *See ANC, 1983 Amendments.*

Imposition of sanctions where appropriate should be designed to achieve the several purposes of the rule, emphasizing the rule's primary purpose of deterring abusive litigation. Such sanctions may include the awarding of attorney's fees or some lesser sanction such as a reprimand for example. The court must consider character of the violation, deficient inquiry or improper purpose, and the possible effects of particular sanctions, chilling meritorious litigation or encouraging "satellite" Rule 11 litigation as a fee-shifting device.

This Court has thoroughly reviewed the pleadings, motions and other papers filed in this case. The Court questions plaintiff's pursuit of this case in light of the lack of dispute with regard to the essential facts. In light of the gross negligence standard in the Sixth Circuit for section 1983 actions, the Court believes that this case comes very close to crossing the line into a justifiable award of Rule 11 sanctions. However, the plaintiff's attorney did provide the Court with information that considerable investigation had been done prior to filing this lawsuit. Accordingly, the Court will deny defendants' motion for sanctions.

An order in accordance with this opinion will issue forthwith.

Dated: December 13, 1989

HON. ROBERT HOLMES BELL  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Certified As A True Copy

C. Duke Hynek, Clerk

By /s/ IKdack

Deputy Clerk

U.S. District Court

Western Dist. of Michigan

Date DEC 13 1989

## APPENDIX G

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION

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FILE NO. G89-50761 CA

Hon. Robert Holmes Bell

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TONYA RHODES, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
ESTATE OF JAMES EDWARD WEST, DECEASED,  
Plaintiff,

v.

CRAIG McDANNEL, H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official capacity as VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF, VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, and VANBUREN COUNTY, Jointly and Severally,

Defendants.

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89 DEC 13 AM 10:17  
CLERK, U.S. DIST COURT  
WESTERN DIST OF MICH

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### ORDER OF THE COURT

In accordance with the Court's written opinion dated December 13, 1989,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Defendants' motion for summary judgment is granted and plaintiff's complaint is dismissed,

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that defendants' motion for sanctions under Fed.R.Civ.P. 11 is denied.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: December 13, 1989

/s/ Robert Holmes Bell  
HON. ROBERT HOLMES BELL  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Certified As A True Copy  
C. Duke Hynek, Clerk  
By /s/ TKdack  
Deputy Clerk

U.S. District Court  
Western Dist. of Michigan  
Date DEC 13 1989

## APPENDIX H

### UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION

FILE NO. G89-60761

TONYA RHODES, Personal Representative  
of the Estate of JAMES EDWARD WEST,  
Deceased,

Plaintiff,

-v-

CRAIG MCDANNEL, H. CAL ROSEMA,  
in his official capacity as Van Buren County  
Sheriff, VAN BUREN COUNTY SHERIFFS  
DEPARTMENT, and VAN BUREN COUNTY,  
jointly and severally,

Defendants.

#### COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

NOW COMES Plaintiff by her attorneys, BOOTHBY  
ZIPRICK & YINGST, and, for her Complaint say as follows:

#### *Jurisdiction*

1. This action is brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988 for violations of the Plaintiff's constitutional rights as embodied in the fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Jurisdiction is founded on 28 U.S.C. 1343, *Monell v. Department of Social Services of the City of New York*, 98 S. Ct. 2018 (1978), and the aforementioned statutory and constitutional provisions. Plaintiff further invokes the pendant jurisdic-

tion of this Court to consider claims arising under state law.

2. The amount in controversy exclusive of interests and costs exceeds the sum of FIFTY THOUSAND (\$50,000) Dollars.

*Parties*

3. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1-2 above.

4. That the Plaintiff Tonya West Rhodes is a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Michigan. She is the personal representative of the estate of James Edward West. Letters of Authority were issued to her on April 4, 1989. She sues as the personal representative of the estate.

5. The Plaintiff's decedent is James Edward West and was at all times relevant hereto a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Michigan, residing in Hartford, Michigan, born January 29, 1944.

6. That Defendant Craig McDannel is and was at all pertinent time periods an employee of the Sheriff Department of Van Buren County in the capacity of a deputy sheriff. He is believed to be a resident of Van Buren County.

7. That Defendant H. Cal Rosema is and was at all times relevant to this Complaint Sheriff of the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department. As such he was the commanding officer of Defendant McDannel and was responsible for training, supervision, and conduct of Defendant McDannel as set forth more fully below. He is also responsible for enforcing the regulations of the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department and for ensuring that Van Buren County Sheriff's deputies obey the laws of the State of Michigan and the United States.

8. That Defendant Van Buren County is an entity within the State of Michigan and at all times relevant hereto employed the Defendants McDannel and Rosema.

9. That Defendant Van Buren County Sheriffs Department is located in the County of Van Buren, State of Michigan.

10. That all times relevant hereto and in all of their actions described herein, Defendants were acting under color of law and pursuant to their authority as deputy sheriff and sheriff.

#### COUNT I

11. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1-10 above.

12. On March 7, 1989, Defendant Craig McDannel, acting in his official capacity as a deputy sheriff of the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office, within the scope of his employment and under color of state law purposefully, knowingly and maliciously used excessive and deadly force in violation of the Plaintiff's rights under the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution by shooting Plaintiff recklessly and without legal authority and even though Plaintiff presented no threat to him or others.

13. As a direct and proximate result of the above described malicious and unlawful acts of Defendant McDannel, James West suffered grievous bodily harm and loss of life, all which is in violation of his rights under the laws and the constitution of the United States, in particular, the First, Fourth, Fifth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments thereof and 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988.

14. That James West was the victim of summary execution at the hands of Defendant McDannel. The punishment administered was grossly disproportionate to

whatever James West's acts may have been, constituted cruel and unusual punishment, and deprived him of the right to due process of law under the laws and Constitution of the United States, in particular the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments thereof. The shooting of James West by Defendant McDannel was unwarranted, cruel, inhuman, unjustifiable and excessive.

15. The failure of Defendants Van Buren County, and the Van Buren County Sheriff to provide supervision and training regarding the lawful use of an officer's service revolver amounts to gross negligence and a deliberate indifference to the safety and lives of the citizens of the City of Hartford and the County of Van Buren. This gross negligence was the proximate cause of the death of Plaintiff's decedent.

16. The lack of training was so reckless and grossly negligent that the deprivations of the constitutional rights of James West were substantially certain to result.

17. That the Defendant Van Buren county failed to adequately train its police officers, acting recklessly and with gross negligence. The failure to train amounting to deliberate indifference to the rights of parties with whom the deputy sheriff come in contact.

18. That Defendant Van Buren County and Van Buren County Sheriff's Department failed to establish procedures and to train personnel to protect against the actions which resulted in the death of James West.

19. That the failure and lack of training and supervision by Defendant County and Sheriff's department is grossly inadequate or nonexistent.

WHEREFORE, as to all Counts alleged herein, Plaintiff seeks damages in any reasonable and proper amount in excess of Fifty Thousand (\$50,000), as shall be determined by a jury, plus interest, costs and attorneys fees.

**COUNT II**

20. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1-19 above.

21. That the Defendant McDannel acted in reckless disregard for the value of human life and was reckless and negligent in the use of his firearm.

WHEREFORE, as to all Counts alleged herein, Plaintiff seeks damages in any reasonable and proper amount in excess of Fifty Thousand (\$50,000), as shall be determined by a jury, plus interest, costs and attorneys fees.

**COUNT III**

22. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1-21 above.

23. Because of the acts alleged herein, the continued employment of Defendant CRAIG MCDANNEL by Defendant Van Buren County Sheriff's Department in any capacity where he carries a revolver and/or other weapon presents a clear and present danger to all citizens in Van Buren County and could result in further illegal use of force and violence by the Defendant.

**COUNT IV**  
*Loss of Society*

24. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference Paragraphs 1-23 above.

25. That decedents children have suffered loss of support, love, care, affection, companionship, comfort and protection.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the following relief, jointly, and severally against all the Defendants:

- A. A declaratory judgment that the policies, practices, and acts complained of herein are illegal and unconstitutional.
- B. A preliminary and permanent injunction preventing Defendant Van Buren County Sheriff's Department and the County of Van Buren from employing Deputy Sheriff Craig McDannel in any capacity where he would carry a revolver and/or any other weapon.
- C. Compensatory damages in the amount of \$30,000,000.
- D. Punitive damages in the amount of \$7,000,000.
- E. Prejudgment interest.
- F. Such other relief as the Court may deem appropriate, including costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

**DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

NOW COMES Plaintiff, through her attorneys, BOOTHBY ZIPRICK & YINGST, and hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues.

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTIES OF PERJURY THAT THIS COMPLAINT HAS BEEN EXAMINED BY ME AND THAT THE CONTENTS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF.

DATED: August 9, 1989

/s/ Tonya West Rhodes  
TONYA WEST RHODES, Personal Representative

BOOTHBY, ZIPRICK & YINGST  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

By: /s/ Robert A. Yingst  
ROBERT A. YINST P22624

By: /s/ Holly F. Underwood  
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APPENDIX I

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT—SOUTHERN DIVISION

Case No. G89- 50761 CA

TONYA RHODES, Personal Representative of the Estate  
of JAMES EDWARD WEST, Deceased

Plaintiff,

v

CRAIG McDANNEL, H. CAL ROSEMA, in his official ca-  
pacity as Van Buren County Sheriff, VAN BUREN COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, and VAN BUREN COUNTY,  
jointly and severally,

Defendant.

Robert A. Yingst (P22624)  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
9047 U.S. 31 North, Ste 201  
Berrien Springs, MI 49103  
(616) 471-7787

Cummings, McClorey, Davis & Acho, P.C.  
By: Richard H. Winslow (P22449)  
Attorney for Defendants  
401 Comerica Bldg  
25 W. Mich. Mall  
Battle Creek, MI 49017  
(616) 963-7800

ANSWER TO PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT

NOW COME your Defendants Craig McDannel, H. Cal  
Rosema, Van Buren County Sheriff's Department and Van  
Buren County by and through their attorney Cummings,

McCloreys, Davis & Acho, P.C., and in Answer to Plaintiff's Complaint shows onto this Honorable Court as follows:

1. Defendants deny Plaintiff's pleadings allege specific violations of 42 USC 1983, 1988, and violations of 4th, 5th and 14th Amendment Rights and deny Plaintiff has established a cause of action under State law such that pendant jurisdiction is appropriate for the reason that no State cause of action is set forth, nor did any violation of Plaintiff's civil rights occur.
2. Defendants neither admit nor deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that Defendants are without sufficient information to respond and leave Plaintiff to her proofs.
3. No answer necessary.
4. Defendants neither admit nor deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that Defendants are without sufficient information to respond and leave Plaintiff to her proofs.
5. Defendants neither admit nor deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that Defendants are without sufficient information to respond and leave Plaintiff to her proofs.
6. Defendants admit the allegations contained therein.
7. Defendant H. Cal Rosema admits that all times pertinent, he was Sheriff of the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department being the highest level and chief executive officer. Defendants deny that he was responsible for training, for the reason that his duties are upper level administrative and supervisory rather than that of an instructor. Defendants further deny that he was directly responsible for the supervision and conduct of Craig McDannel for the reason that lower ranking supervisors are responsible to supervise Deputy McDannel and neither Federal nor State law recognizes respondeat superior liability for the conduct

of subordinate sheriff deputy. Defendants further deny that he is responsible for ensuring deputies obey the laws for the reason that said allegations are vague, overly broad and incorrectly state the applicable law.

8. Defendants admit the allegations contained therein.

9. Defendants deny that Van Buren County Sheriff's Department is a legal entity subject to suit and shows that said "Defendant" should be dismissed as improperly named and joined.

10. Defendants admit that they were acting under color of law, pursuant to their duty as Deputy Sheriff and Sheriff but rely upon individual responses to the Plaintiff's averments as set forth hereafter.

#### COUNT I

11. Defendants hereby incorporate by reference their answers to paragraphs 1 through 10.

12. Defendants admit that Deputy McDannel used deadly force against James West under color of law but deny the remaining allegations for the reason that the same are untrue as a matter of law and fact.

13. Defendants admit that James West died as a result of the use of deadly force by Deputy McDannel but deny the remaining allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue as a matter of law and fact.

14. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

15. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

16. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

17. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

18. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

19. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

WHEREFORE your Defendants pray this Honorable Court to dismiss Plaintiff's Complaint together with costs and reasonable attorney fees as provided by 42 USC 1988, Federal Rules Civil Procedure 11 and MCL 600.2411.

#### COUNT II

20. Defendants hereby incorporate by reference their answers to paragraphs 1 through 19.

21. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

WHEREFORE your Defendants pray this Honorable Court to dismiss Plaintiff's Complaint together with costs and reasonable attorney fees as provided by 42 USC 1988, Federal Rules Civil Procedure 11 and MCL 600.2411.

#### COUNT III

22. Defendants hereby incorporate by reference their answers to paragraphs 1 through 21.

23. Defendants deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that the same are untrue.

WHEREFORE your Defendants pray this Honorable Court to dismiss Plaintiff's Complaint together with costs and reasonable attorney fees as provided by 42 USC 1988, Federal Rules Civil Procedure 11 and MCL 600.2411.

#### COUNT IV

24. Defendants hereby incorporate by reference their answers to paragraph 1 through 23.

25. Defendants neither admit nor deny the allegations contained therein for the reason that Defendants are without sufficient information to respond and leave Plaintiffs to their proofs.

WHEREFORE your Defendants pray this Honorable Court to dismiss Plaintiff's Complaint, to deny all declaratory and injunctive relief sought by Plaintiff and to grant attorney fees provided by 42 USC 1988, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11 and MCL 600.2411.

#### **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

PLEASE TAKE NOTE that upon litigation of the above captioned actions your Defendants will offer the following Affirmative Defenses:

1. That the entity named as Van Buren County Sheriffs Department is not a legal entity subject to suit and should be dismissed summarily.
2. That Plaintiff failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted against the Van Buren County Sheriffs Department.
3. Plaintiff's Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted against H. Cal Rosema in his official capacity as Van Buren County Sheriff.
4. Plaintiff's Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted against Craig McDannel.
5. Plaintiff's Complaint fails to state a claim sufficiently specific to plead facts or theories for recovery under claimed violations of
  - a. First Amendment Rights
  - b. Fourth Amendment Rights
  - c. Fifth Amendment Rights
  - d. Eighth Amendment Rights

- e. Fourteenth Amendment Rights
- f. Section 42 USC 1983
- g. 42 USC Section 1988
- h. Paragraph H MCL 691.1407; and

that Defendants are entitled to governmental immunity as provided by said statute for the alleged claims under State law.

6. As the highest elected executive of the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department, H. Carl Rosema enjoys absolute immunity.

7. Plaintiff fails to state a cause of action claimant H. Cal Rosema is liable for actions and conduct of a deputy pursuant to MCL 51.70.

8. Defendant Craig McDannel was privileged to use deadly force in the performance of his official capacities as a law enforcement officer.

9. Defendant Craig McDannel was privileged to use deadly force in the exercise of self-defense for himself and those for whom he was obligated to protect, including Shari Hoffington, when confronted with an assailant armed with a deadly weapon.

10. Plaintiff was guilty of negligence or reckless and grossly negligent conduct in approaching Defendant McDannel in a threatening manner, armed with a deadly weapon, and in failing to obey the lawful orders of the law enforcement officer to stop and put down his weapon where Deputy McDannel openly displayed his service revolver.

11. That Craig McDannel is entitled to qualified immunity of good faith in the use of deadly force when threatened by Plaintiff with imminent deadly force where James West steadily continued to advance toward the Defendant with a large machete in a menacing manner,

within the distance of 4 feet and while disregarding orders to stop and drop the machete, particularly after Defendant had been advised that James West had been chasing Shari Hoffington with a knife immediately before he arrived at the scene thereby establishing probable cause to believe a felony had been committed by James West and that the assaultive behavior coupled with the present means to inflict serious and fatal injury in the presence of Defendant McDannel constituted the commission of a serious and dangerous felony in his presence.

12. Plaintiff fails to plead facts or theory upon which recovery may be obtained under the principal of respondeat superior both as to Federal and State claims.

13. Defendant McDannel was a duly trained and State certified law enforcement officer solely and adequately qualified and trained in the proper use and exercise of care with his service revolver in compliance with all governmental agency requirements.

14. Defendants reserve the right to amend their Answer to include such additional Affirmative Defenses as shall become known through the course of pre-trial discovery and/or litigation in the above captioned action.

Respectfully submitted,

CUMMINGS, McCLOREY, DAVIS & ACHO, P.C.

By: /s/ Richard H. Winslow

Richard H. Winslow (P22449)

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Battle Creek, MI 49017

Attorneys for Defendants